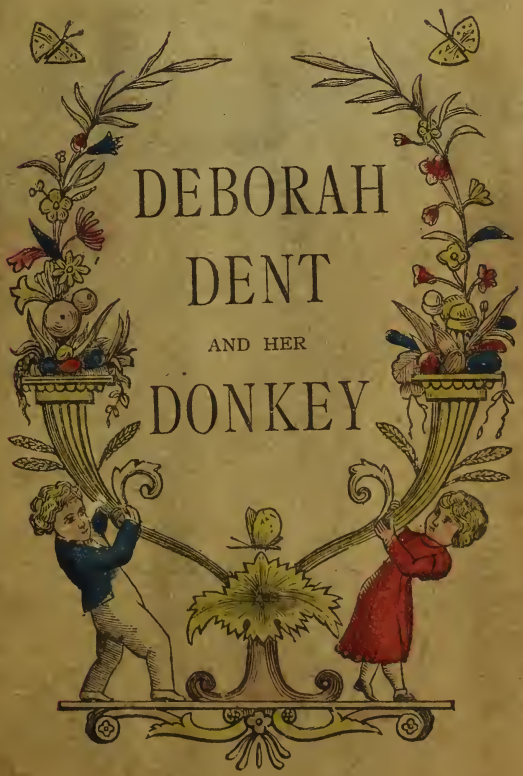
The Leadenhall Press Series of

Forgotten Picture Books for Children.



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"· · · I'LL KISS THIS SWEET DONKEY OF MINE." page 6

THE DONKEY TURNED SCHOOLMASTER. page 14

Deborah Dent

AND

HER DONKEY

A HUMOROUS TALE

EMBELLISHED WITH

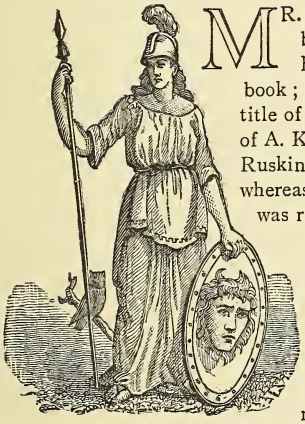
Ten Beautifully-Coloured Engravings

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

1823
LONDON:
Dean & Munday, Threadneedle Street; and A. K. Newman & Co., The Minerva Press, Leadenhall Street.

1887
LONDON:
Republished by Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press, E.C.

INTRODUCTION.



MR. Ruskin recently reproduced in facsimile a child's book of verse and pictures which had delighted him. He was silent as to the authorship of the book; but it was first published in 1823, under the title of *Dame Wiggins of Lee.* As it bears the imprint of A. K. Newman & Co., of the Minerva Press, Mr. Ruskin naturally credits the little book to that firm, whereas its publication, as will be presently explained, was really due to others.

In *Fors*, vol. 5, pp. 37-8, Mr. Ruskin praises the rhythmic cadence of the verses, and he further says in the Introduction to his reprint: "I think that clever children will like having the mere outlines to colour in their own way,* and for older students there may be some interest in observing how much life and reality may be obtained by the simplest methods of engraving, when the design is founded upon action instead of effect. . . . I have the greatest pleasure," continues Mr. Ruskin, "in commending *Dame Wiggins of Lee* to the indulgence of the Christmas fireside, because it relates to nothing that is sad and pourtrays nothing that is ugly."

It is a tradition in the house of Dean & Sons, of whose connexion with this little book I shall have more to say, that *Dame Wiggins of Lee* was written by a Mrs. Sharpe, sister of a grocer of that name, in Bishopsgate Street, but, following a preliminary announcement of these reprints in *The Athenæum*, the joint authorship is claimed, and it would appear justly, for Mr. Richard Scrafton Sharpe and Mrs. Pearson. On turning to the title page, it will be seen that the verses were written "principally by a lady of ninety." The following is the claim as set forth in *The Athenæum* of September 24th, 1887.

It has been stated that *Dame Wiggins of Lee* was written by Mrs. Sharpe. A daughter of the late Charles Sharpe, of the firm of Vernon, Hood & Sharpe, has sent us a letter in which Mr. Frederic Sharpe claims the authorship for his father, the late Richard Scrafton Sharpe. Mr. Sharpe writes:—"I dare say you remember the toyshop in Fleet Street, I think opposite the church with the figures that struck the hour; it was kept by a Mrs. Pearson, who at the age of ninety wrote *Dame Wiggins of Lee* jointly with my father, who, from internal evidence, I suspect had the greatest hand in it. In the title-page he generously yields to her the authorship." Our correspondant adds: "I recollect my uncle having written *Dame Wiggins of Lee*, and Mr. Barham, the author of the *Ingoldsby Legends*, and the Rev. Sydney Smith laughing at it. Mr. R. S. Sharpe wrote *Old Friends in a New Dress* (Æsop's Fables), and *Shepherds tell me have you seen?* a popular song.

From the style of draughtsmanship I think there can be little doubt that the illustrations to *Dame Wiggins of Lee*, which have been ascribed to Sir H. Brooks,

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**In the original edition the illustrations are hand-coloured. The unfolded sheets were given out to a number of girls. If six colours were used—and there were seldom more—six girls would be required. No. 1, after filling in, say, all the parts coloured blue would pass the sheet on to No. 2, who would add the red. This plan of colouring has been followed with the present series of reprints.*

of Hastings, are by R. Stennet, whose name appears in an advertisement of the period as illustrator of a couple of very amusing little stories, *Deborah Dent and her Donkey*, and *Madam Fig's Gala.*

Dame Wiggins of Lee was, at one time, a very popular book indeed, four differently illustrated editions rapidly following each other, but in the later ones the humour of the first was entirely absent, and they met the usual fate of mediocrity.

That excellent periodical, *Notes and Queries*, beloved by those whose delight is to delve in the annals of the past, has repeatedly contained enquiries concerning the Minerva Press, Leadenhall Street, whence emanated during its long career a vast number of novels, chiefly of the sickly-sentimental and blood-and-thunder school. Particulars of interest, however, are of the scantiest.

The Minerva Printing Press was first set up about 1790, by Mr. Lane, in Cree Church Lane, Leadenhall Street. A year or two later—unfortunately I cannot be more precise—Mr. Lane took himself and his press to 31, Leadenhall Street, where he started a circulating library, and printed *Lane's Annual Novelist*, mentioned in terms of dubious praise by Charles Lamb in his *Elia.* Newman, the publisher who joined Lane, occasionally re-published an American book, Carey & Lee, of Philadelphia, usually acting as his agents. On the title page of *The Refugee*, a three volume romance, by Captain Murgatroyd, (1825) the wording of the imprint is "New York, printed for Wilder & Campbell: London, re-printed for A. K. Newman," which is certainly an honest way of putting it. The Minerva Press Novels were in three, four, or five highly-spiced volumes, and up to about 1828 were generally printed on a harsh textured paper of a dirty straw colour. Amongst the more prolific, and we may take it popular, writers of fiction, of whose works a long list could be compiled, were Mrs. Meeke, Henrietta Rouviere Mosse, Rosalia St. Clair, Selina Davenport, Mr. Cooper, Miss McLeod, "Ann of Swansea," Regina Maria Roche, Zara Wentworth, and Elizabeth Helme, whose *Farmer of Inglewood Forest* still lingers in the memory. Mrs. Hofland's books for children, and others of a similar stamp, were "embellished" with a copper-plate frontispiece, and in this series the text is the principal attraction, whereas in the series represented by *Dame Wiggins of Lee*, the strength is in the illustrations.

I have seen it somewhere stated that Samuel William Henry Ireland employed Newman in 1805 to publish the *Confessions* of his Shakesperian forgeries, but neither the *Confessions*, nor the *Authentic Account* that preceded it by some nine years, bears the Minerva Press imprint, which is also entirely absent in the large collection of his works in the British Museum. In a contemporary advertisement of a list of the Minerva Press Juvenile Prize Books and Presents appears *Shipwrecked Orphans, a True Narrative, by John Ireland*, but the publication of this little book was also due to others.

It was towards the end of the last century that Lane took A. K. Newman and John Darling, a clever young Edinburgh printer, into partnership, the firm trading for a short time as Lane, Darling, Newman & Co. Then came a separa-

tion, Darling continuing to print for Lane, Newman & Co. in premises immediately behind No. 31. Soon afterwards Lane retired from business, and Newman, over whose central door was a bust of Minerva, and whose book imprint was "A. K. Newman & Co., at the Minerva Press, Leadenhall Street," devoted himself exclusively to publishing. Newman finally retired about 1849 or 1850, and was succeeded by Robert S. Parry who purchased his stock, but when in 1859 the premises were pulled down to make way for modern improvements all traces of the Minerva Press publishing business seem to have disappeared. Mr. Darling's son, who is assisted by *his* sons, is a successful London printer and continues to use the sign of the "Minerva Press." Over the door of his Eastcheap premises the old bust depicted in the cut may still be seen.

A. K. Newman & Co. had in their employment several country travellers and this led to an arrangement with another equally well-known publishing house, Dean & Munday, of Threadneedle Street, whose business operations were confined exclusively to London, and who issued a great number of entertaining and cleverly illustrated books for children. Of those that pleased him Newman was in the habit of ordering, at half the published price, special editions of one thousand copies, wherein the imprint of Dean & Munday, Threadneedle Street, was dropped and his own substituted. When copies were ordered in small quantities only, as required, this arrangement was departed from, and the joint imprint used of Dean & Munday, Threadneedle Street, and A. K. Newman & Co., Leadenhall Street. *Dame Wiggins of Lee* was published by Dean & Munday, Newman buying under the arrangement mentioned one thousand copies on which his imprint alone appeared. Mr. Ruskin's copy was one of these, and hence his misconception as to the name of the real publisher. Reprints of the same edition bear the joint imprint of Dean & Munday and A. K. Newman & Co.

I was lately fortunate enough to sweep into what Mr. Sala is pleased to term my "omnivorous drag-net" the almost forgotten, and for a generation or two unused, wood blocks used in the old days by Dean & Munday for their children's books, and on examination I found to my delight that amongst them were not only the original cuts to *Dame Wiggins of Lee* but those to *Deborah Dent and her Donkey*, and *Madam Fig's Gala*, besides many others of equal interest. Through the kindness of Mr. Dean, largely supplemented by drafts made upon my own collection, I have gathered together copies of nearly all the little books which these blocks illustrate. Their interest is various. Sometimes it is the simple attraction of frolic rhymes illustrated with vigour; sometimes it is the subject rather than the manner of the designs that delights us—a record of costume, for instance, quite unintentionally but not the less keenly grotesque; sometimes again we are beguiled of our laughter by the solemnity of these minor writers for little readers—their use of words that seem much longer than the babies who are supposed to speak them, the disproportionate morals of the stories, and truly errific retributions cheerfully inflicted in the most polite phrases. For such things belong to a state of the world passed away and forgotten.

In letting him know of the "find" I asked Mr. Ruskin whether he would object to my issuing, in a cheap form, *Dame Wiggins of Lee* with the original blocks, and he characteristically replies, "I shall be entirely glad that the public should be further interested in or more generally possessed of the old designs."

Of Dean & Munday, whose fortunes were so closely interwoven with those of A. K. Newman & Co., Mr. G. A. H. Dean, head of the well-known publishing house of Dean & Sons, Fleet Street, is the direct descendant. Dean & Munday published for the two Miss Stricklands and for Miss Corner, of whose *History of England*, still popular in a revised form, over 100,000 copies have been sold. Mr. Dean of the old firm married the daughter of a well-known printer named Bailey, of Bishopsgate Street, whose sign **A a B** for many years displayed above the entrance to his premises, was always interpreted to the curious as

Great A, little a, and a big bouncing **B**†

Bailey is said to have been the originator of a cheap method of printing, by which he at first hopelessly cut out rivals. He made up a large forme of type containing a number of small advertising bills for different clients and printed them all off at one time. Before this each job had been separately printed.

In the early days of Dean & Munday's firm the partners lived for terms of three months in Threadneedle Street. A partnership on too close a basis has, however, its awkwardnesses, and after marriage, when children began to appear, things somehow began to get a little mixed. It is on record that when the nurse kept permanently on the staff was one day walking in Threadneedle Street with her little charges, a stranger asked her whose they were. "Oh," said she, "them's Dean & Munday's children!"

Another little story of the period has been handed down. A complaint made by one of Dean & Munday's apprentices concerning the quality of the food supplied was investigated, as usual in those days, at the Guildhall. Mr. Dean, who appeared with the apprentice before the Chamberlain, explained that the lad was fed at his own table, and that the joints were had from Crowe, of Throgmorton Street, the best City butcher of the time. "The meat's bad," muttered the boy sulkily. "What's the matter with it?" said the Chamberlain. "Why it's always the same—you give it one turn, and then down it goes: there's no chew in it."

ANDREW W. TUER.

Of this series of Forgotten Picture Books for Children, *Dame Wiggins of Lee* forms No. 1, *The Gaping Wide-mouthed Waddling Frog* No. 2, and *Deborah Dent and her Donkey* No. 3: others will follow.

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† *A variant of the first two lines of an old nursery rhyme:*

Great A, little a,
Bouncing **B**;
The cat's in the cupboard
And she can't see.

Deborah Dent had a Donkey so fine !
Marrowbones, cherrystones,
Bundle'em jig.

Cried Debby, I'll kiss this sweet Donkey of mine,
For sure the dear creature is almost divine ;
Look at his eyes, how they sparkle and shine!

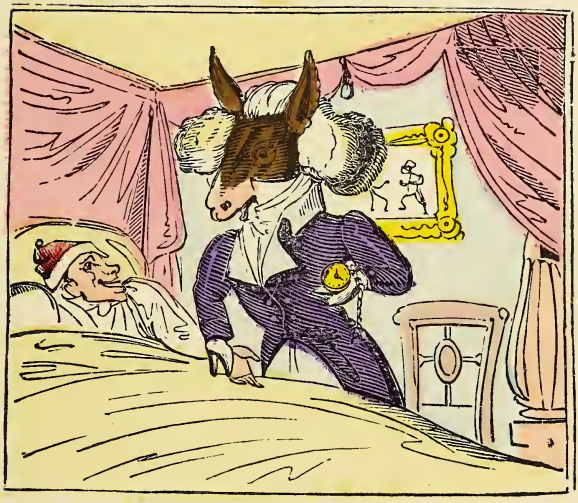
He's an ambling, scambling,
Braying-sweet, turn-up feet,
Mane-cropt, tail-lopt,
High-bred, thistle-fed,
Merry old Bundle'em jig.

In a car the fair ladies at Brighton he drew,
Marrowbones, cherrystones,
Bundle'em jig.

And jogging along with a jolly fat crew,
Quite into the sea for coolness he flew,
And made some fine pastime for dandies to view.

Like an ambling, scambling,
Braying-sweet, turn-up feet,
Mane-cropt, tail-lopt,
High-bred, thistle-fed,
Merry old Bundle'em jig.

To the stump of his tail some gay ribands she bound,
Marrowbones, cherrystones,
Bundle'em jig.
And then at the races he tript o'er the ground,
And bore off the prize, 'ere a flea could hop round :
Though the slowest of Donkeys the winner is found,
He's an ambling, scambling,
Braying-sweet, turn-up feet,
Mane-cropt, tail-lopt,
High-bred, thistle-fed,
Merry old Bundle'em jig.



Cries the dame, Pray turn Doctor, my honey,
d'ye see ?
Marrowbones, cherrystones,
Bundle'em jig.

You'll get high in practice, and pocket a fee :
Since many a doctor (all parties agree)
Is famous, though silly as silly can be ;

Oh, thou ambling, scambling,
Braying-sweet, turn-up feet,
Mane-cropt, tail-lopt,
High-bred, thistle-fed,
Merry old Bundle'em jig.

Says Deborah, Wherefore, since learning's the rage,
Marrowbones, cherrystones,
Bundle'em jig,
Should not my dear Donkey teach children their page?
Pray set up a school, and be one of the sage,
In this wonderful, wonderful, wonderful age,
Like an ambling, scambling,
Braying-sweet, turn-up feet,
Mane-cropt, tail-lopt,
High-bred, thistle-fed,
Merry old Bundle'em jig.

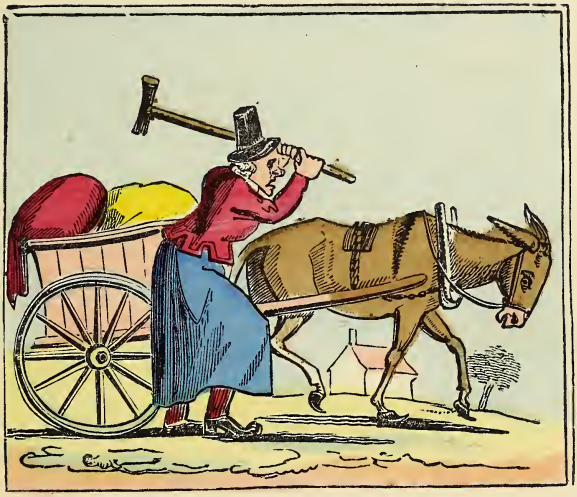
She sent for a barber, her Donkey to shave,
Marrowbones, cherrystones,
Bundle'em jig,

Cried Frizzle,—O, sir, what a strong beard you have !
This counsellor's wig will make you look grave,
And then at the bar you may bellow and rave
Like an ambling, scambling,
Braying-sweet, turn-up feet,
Mane-cropt, tail-lopt,
High-bred, thistle-fed,
Merry old Bundle'em jig.

And now, since your talents are gen'ral, you
know,
Marrowbones, cherrystones,
Bundle'em jig.

Set up as an artist, take portraits also.
The Ass took the hint—daub'd a canvas or so,
But found that his genius was lazy and slow.

Like an ambling, scambling,
Braying-sweet, turn-up feet,
Mane-cropt, tail-lopt,
High-bred, thistle-fed,
Merry old Bundle'em jig.



My tale to conclude : he draws sand in a cart,
Marrowbones, cherrystones,
Bundle'em jig.

Having failed to get credit in science or art,
With her crutch Deb pretends that she'll give him a smart,
Though she's fond of her old Donkey still in her heart,

Who's still an ambling, scambling,
Braying-sweet, turn-up feet,
Mane-cropt, tail-lopt,
High-bred, thistle-fed,
Merry old Bundle'em jig.

Now if you want some volumes nice,
You'll start at once I'm su-er,
And go and fetch them in a trice,
From Messrs. FIELD AND TUER.—*Punch.*

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